

WISCOM SUBCOMMITTEE

02-16-2021

Agenda:

Convene: 9:00am

Roll call: Quorum established.

COMMENTS:

- Randy Pickering, MABAS Wisconsin and Chief, Edgerton Fire – MABAS (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System) lives and breathes interoperability; supports concerns that have been raised about moving toward a 800 system.
- Nova Nordrum, Chief, Lakeside Fire (daily user) – Douglas County Fire Departments have worked hard at being on board with WISCOM. If a change is made to the 800 band it would cost \$87,000 for Lakeside Fire to replace existing radios. The financial burden to small departments would prohibit participation.
- Matt Joski, Sheriff, Kewaunee County (daily user) and Chair, Interoperability Council (IC) – the IC will be drafting a letter to the Adjutant General to accompany the recommendations being discussed. Thank everyone for their input.
- Keith Kesler, Chief Brule Fire (daily user) and Chair WISCOM subcommittee – received multiple phone calls opposing the move to a complete 800 system.
- Joe Bash, EMS (daily user) – Concern about the significant financial burden for agencies to move from VHF. Oppose moving to strictly 800 system.
- Kirk Gunderson, WEMSA and Mayo Medical (daily user) – Concerned about costs related to move to 800. State offer assistance to current users. VHF will not go away in the field.
- Jennifer Lord, DNR and WISCOM subcommittee – Moving to 800 will be expensive. Requires a long-term project. Suggest short term project of replacing current WISCOM VHF repeaters (purchased in 2008/2009) while planning for long-term approach that will cost upwards of \$1 billion dollars for infrastructure.
- Jan Victorson, Director BAEM – multiple conversations with county fire and ems organizations representing 15 fire departments/9 ambulance services. Concern expressed about cost of radios to work on a 800 system while maintaining the VHF capability of VHF on scene and interoperability radio channels. 54 of the 72 counties maintain VHF systems. The northwest WEM region counties all maintain VHF for dispatching and radio communications. Also concern about the need for additional sites with a move to 800 and local costs for additional infrastructure.
- Steve Fenske, WEM SE Region Director – ¾ of the counties in the SE region are VHF. Overall concern about costs and operability.
- Randy Pickering – Cannot have “winners” or “losers” when talking about interoperable system of communications. System must facilitate all daily users. Support for a hybrid approach. Shared map and statistics: 81% of WI is exclusive VHF; 10% exclusive 800; 9% hybrid (combination of the two); 84,700 VHF only radios; 437 million cost to local users to replace; no estimate on cost to state agencies. A hybrid system would decrease the cost of replacing radios to \$87 million. May be able to add trunking to existing radios...
- Kirk Gunderson – Assistance for daily users is imperative.
- Dan Weber, Milwaukee – 800 has provided penetration into buildings. Hybrid approach may assist in transition to future technologies.

Sheriff Matt Joski will begin drafting letter based on input. He will work with Keith Kesler to assure concerns and feedback are reflected in the letter and a broader snapshot of considerations is presented to the Adjutant General.

Next meeting – March 10

Joint LMR and WISCOM Subcommittees

Agenda items: EMS Communications Plan; Election of Officers; Other?

Motion to adjourn by Kirk Gunderson, seconded by Paul Eaton. No objections. Adjourned at 9:56am.